

## **Margaret Alison**

Tape 183

Interviewer: Mariel Goodrich (a child), 3 April 1987

Transcribed by Kathleen Irving, April 2001

Mariel Goodrich (MG): This interview is of Margaret Alison. She is 73 years old. The subject that we will talk about is school. We are taking the interview at her house. Today is April 3, 1987. I am Maryell Goodrich and I'm a student at Lapoint Elementary. I am taking this interview for a class project.

What was school like in the early 1900s?

Margaret Alison (Margaret): School was usually two classes in one room. The teacher would describe something that would pertain to both classes and then she would take an assignment to one class, then teach the other class.

MG: Describe one of the schools you went to.

Margaret: Well, I went to the old Maeser School for seven years. There was eight grades there, but the last year I lived with Grandpa, so I got permission to go to the Vernal school and I went down to the Jr. High School in Vernal. So I only went seven years to the Maeser School.

It was a two-story building. It had four rooms on each floor and sort of in between was the principal's office and the library.

MG: What were the school rules like and how did the teachers and principals keep the rules?

Margaret: Well, you couldn't run in the halls. You had to stay outdoors during recess. The teachers were very strict on quiet classrooms. And the principal was also a teaching person, so he was strict in his own room and didn't have much to do with the kids in the other rooms.

MG: How did you get to school?

Margaret: I walked to school one and three-fourths miles for the seven years. When I was in the eighth grade was the year they started buses. They didn't have any buses up to that time. I rode to Vernal in the bus that year.

MG: What did you do when it came time to eat lunch?

Margaret: We had no lunch room. We ate in the room in cold weather and in warm weather we'd eat in groups around on the lawn. We took our own lunch. Peanut butter and honey was my favorite. My Nanny would make jam, real thick, so that it wouldn't melt into the bread.

MG: Describe how the school was heated.

Margaret: We had a large furnace room. In the furnace room in mid-winter when we got there too early—the school was locked until the teachers were ready for us to come in—but the janitor would let us go down into the big furnace room and we would wait in that room until we could get in. They had a big, like a pipe, that was made in the wall, only it was square and the heat would go up those ducts. Then it would come out into the room. They'd have a wall above where they'd have a heater and then above that, they'd have a wall so the heat had to come out into the room.

MG: What kind of games were played at recess and describe how the games were played.

Margaret: We played Run-Sheep-Run, Colors, Fox and Geese. I don't ever remember playing ball until I got in about the 7<sup>th</sup> grade and then we played softball. I was on the softball team and I remember going down to Glines Ward to play softball with their school.

MG: How was Run-Sheep-Run and Fox and Geese played?

Margaret: Run-Sheep-Run, we'd go around the house and the leader of one would call directions to the sheep and they had to stay out of reach. If the one that was hunting the sheep found them before the sheep could get back to the pasture, then they had to change sides.

Fox and Geese was played only when the snow was on the ground. We had a large circle, then we'd make a circle in the very center and that was home. One person was the fox and he'd chase them around the circle and they had paths that would go to the center so that they could get back to home. If the fox caught them, they had to stop playing, they had to be put in a sort of a jail-like, they couldn't play. Then when the fox caught them all, then the last one caught would be fox and they'd start the game over.

MG: Which was your favorite and why was it your favorite?

Margaret: Colors, I think, because I liked the crowd that played colors.

MG: How did you play Colors?

Margaret: Colors was almost like Run-Sheep-Run, only instead of giving directions to the sheep, they'd yell colors and each color... The group would decide which color meant to go which direction and the leader would go with those that was hunting and he would say, "Red, red, red!" And red meant run around the house clockwise. If he said, "Green, green, green," that would mean go the other direction, go counter-clockwise. So we played it running around the schoolhouse.

MG: What did it cost to go to school?

Margaret: Well, grade school was free. There was no cost for that.

MG: How about the older grades?

Margaret: When I went to Jr. High, the tuition was \$3.50 and we had to pay some on the books. When I went to high school it was \$10 and we had to buy our own books and then we could turn them in and get some money back at the end of the year.

MG: For what they were worth?

Margaret: Yes.

MG: What kind of activities did your school sponsor? Like field trips is what we have today. What did they do in those days.

Margaret: I can't remember a thing we did at school.

MG: Okay, that's alright. Was it a state law to go to school?

Margaret: Yes, it was a state law to go to school.

MG: And that's why you went to school?

Margaret: I don't know. I guess I just wanted to go. The truant officer come around once in a while and I remember I didn't want to see the truant officer.

MG: What's the truant officer?

Margaret: A truant officer is a man that the school board hired, like a policeman, and if a person is out of school more than a week without the principal finding out what's the matter, then this truant officer goes and sees the parents and if the parents.... He'll go there and he'll say, like, "Is Johnny home today?" And they'd say, "Oh, no, Johnny's to school." But the truant officer already knows Johnny's not to school, so he's playing truant. So he catches up with Johnny and takes him to his parents and he get punished.

MG: That's all I have.

Margaret: I went to seventh grade at Maeser, eighth grade at Vernal, ninth and tenth at Uintah High School, and eleventh and twelfth at Lincoln High School in Orem. Then from there I went to college and graduated.

MG: What were some of the experiences you had when you went to school, some of the fun

experiences, some of ones that you remember.

Margaret: Well, in order to go to college I worked for my tuition. I was taking chemistry and I was pretty good, so I taught the lab classes in chemistry. In the lab we always called everybody by their last name, so I was Dudley: "Hey, Dudley, I want this! Dudley, I want that!" And "Help me with this!" So everybody knew me as Dudley. And there was a new student who came to school and he went to the professor and he says, "Where do I go and what do I do in my lab class?" And the professor said, "Well, you go down and Dudley will tell you what to do." So, being chemistry, he'd just thought it'd be a boy, so he went down there and he said to the first person he saw, "Where's Uncle Dudley?" And this person says, "I'll show you" and took him to the door and pointed me out and said, "See, there's your Uncle Dudley!" Oh, was he ever embarrassed!

MG: Do you have any more?

Margaret: One day I went down to teach my lab class and there were some students who had been in there working, trying to get their experiment done before class started. When I got to the door, I was met by a boy and he says, "You can't come in." And I said, "I can come in, I'm supposed to teach this class!" He said, "Not today!" One of the boys had been cleaning some equipment and he had this strong acid that's he'd composed and he'd accidentally broke the flask that it was in and it had dropped down on his clothes and he was almost like he was undressed. So, they had to run back to his apartment and get some clothes, so I didn't even want to go in then.

MG: That's pretty good.

Margaret: The first day I went to school was on my seventh birthday, when I was seven years old. The first day I taught school was on my birthday. That was in 1938.